

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 9, 2014

No. TR-06

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Chairman Nunes Announces Hearing on Advancing the U.S. Trade Agenda: The World Trade Organization

House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-CA) today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on the U.S. trade agenda and the World Trade Organization with Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Michael Punke. **The hearing will take place on Wednesday, July 16, 2014, in 1100 Longworth House Office Building, beginning at 10:00 A.M.**

In view of the limited time available to hear from the witness, oral testimony at this hearing will be from the invited witness only. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

BACKGROUND:

The World Trade Organization's (WTO) 160 members cover 97 percent of world trade. The WTO, with the assistance of its secretariat, oversees a series of multilateral trade agreements covering goods, services, and intellectual property; provides a venue for new negotiations; reviews and monitors trade patterns, policies and practices; and provides procedures to resolve trade disputes between members.

Last December, at the WTO's 9th Ministerial Meeting, WTO members agreed to a package of commitments, including a Trade Facilitation Agreement that experts estimate could add as much as \$1 trillion to global GDP. The agreement incorporates many key requirements to reduce barriers at the border and improve trade flows, such as publication of rules and laws, harmonization and simplification of documents, advanced rulings, enhanced rights of appeal, and use of automated processes, among others. This is the first multilateral trade agreement concluded by WTO members since the WTO was formed in 1994, and its successful implementation will make it easier for U.S. businesses of all sizes to participate in international trade. WTO members are now working to implement the agreement, with a key deadline of July 31.

Negotiations continue in other important areas, including expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and the launch of environmental goods negotiations. In addition,

some WTO members have suggested restarting broad, Doha-round discussions that cover many sectors, but others, including the United States, are exploring other, more focused negotiating options with like-minded trading partners. For example, negotiation of the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) is ongoing in Geneva among those WTO members willing and able to meet the agreement's high standards, but it is not being negotiated under the auspices of the WTO.

The WTO Agreements include a dispute settlement chapter to provide neutral arbitration of disputes between members. Nearly 500 cases have been filed at the WTO, including more than 100 filed by the United States.

Finally, the WTO plays an important role in reviewing and monitoring trade trends and their impact on the multilateral trading system. The WTO Agreements require members to regularly report on measures affecting trade. In addition, the WTO Secretariat periodically reviews and catalogs trade measures of all WTO members and WTO members regularly conduct peer-reviews of other members to identify policies that they view as trade distorting.

In announcing this hearing, Chairman Nunes said, **“The World Trade Organization had been instrumental in liberalizing world trade. But many of its efforts have focused on twentieth-century issues such as reducing and eliminating tariffs. We’d like to explore ways the WTO could more effectively address today’s behind-the-border barriers to trade and continue to address remaining tariff and non-tariff barriers, including sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agriculture trade that are not based on sound science.”**

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The focus of the hearing is on U.S. trade policy and the World Trade Organization. The hearing focus will include: (1) implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and opportunities created by the agreement; (2) the potential benefits of an ambitious agreement to expand the Information Technology Agreement; (3) the launch of the recently notified environmental goods agreement; (4) the important role of ongoing monitoring and enforcement activities; and (5) future work of the WTO.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, “Click here to provide a submission for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. ATTACH your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, by the close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2014. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721 or (202) 225-3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.